India has all along maintained that unilateral coercive measures are unjustified, counter productive and impede free flow of trade, technology and capital and have an adverse impact on mutually beneficial economic interaction. Our view point and security concerns have also been conveyed through diplomatic channels and during the course of bilateral talks. The Resurgent India Bonds Scheme was also launched and has met with great success. Major countries have themselves refrained from imposing bilateral sanctions and within the US itself, there has been substantial rethinking on the efficacy of unilateral measures. This is reflected in the recent authorisation by the US Congress to the US President to waive some of the sanctions against India and in exercising that authority the US Administration has recently decided to partially lift some of the economic sanctions.

Automobile Policy

*104. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a high level European Commission has recently held discussions with officials of his Ministry on country's automobile policy and other trade issues; and

(b) if so, what is the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) A European Commission delegation held discussions on 18-19 November, 1998 at New Delhi with officials of the Ministry of Commerce and Officials of other Ministries concerned and Departments of Government of India on various World Trade Organisation (WTO) issues of mutual interest. Inter alia, India's Automobile Policy on which the European Union (EU) has sought certain clarifications also came up for discussion.

(b) The discussion were in the nature of informal consultations and no decisions, as such, were taken.

Retirement Benefits to Employees of HEC, Ranchi

*105. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for which retirement and other benefits are not being released in time to the retiring employees of Heavy Engineering Corporation Ltd., Ranchi, for the last one year; and

(b) by when Government propose to release their dues?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) and (b) BIFR package for revival is under implementation in HEC Government is releasing fund to the company as per the package. Already Rs. 71 Crore have been released for payment towards statutory liabilities and other dues like pressing creditors etc. Against employees related dues of Rs. 30.85 Crore envisaged in the BIFR package, a sum of Rs. 39 Crore have been paid by the company.

Employees at the time of retirement are entitled to Contributory Provident Fund, Gratuity, Leave Salary and Travel Allowance. No payment is pending against Contributory Provident Fund. Gratuity & Leave Salary have been cleared for the employees who retired up to August, 1997 and claims against Travel Allowance up to June, 1996. Some other dues on account of pay revision arrears and leave travel allowance are also being cleared. The performance of the company is far below the projections made in the revival plan. This is resulting in continuous losses making it difficult for the company to pay the dues in time. Hence it is making payments in chronological order as per the date of retirement.